****

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit 1** | **Class** | **Due** |
| **WEEK 1 – January 11-15** | | |
| **M 1/11** | Syllabus, Bb, Wiki, Readings, google docs, overview of papers and research project |  |
| **W 1/13** | Video, Unit 1 – cause/effect, Master Rubric, Critical Thinking guide, Choosing a word. | Read Trimble “Thinking Well” – write Journal entry (google doc) that answers this question: how does this discussion of writing compare to what you do as a writer? Be honest. |
| **WEEK 2– January 18-22** | | |
| **W 1/20** | GG, blind writing, In-text citation, Works Cited page, paraphrasing, researching | Word choice due |
| **WEEK 3 – January 25-29** | | |
| **M 1/25** | GG, Style (punctuation) rhetoric, Thesis/intro/conclusions, paragraphing | Read Grant-Davie’s article on “Rhetorical Situations” and write up answers to questions at end of chapter. Vomit draft due. |
| **W 1/27** | Style, Peer review | Draft due for peer review |
| **WEEK 4 – February 1-5** | | |
| **M 2/1** | Exam | Draft due on Bb for grading |

# In a nutshell

* A six to eight page paper discussing the definition(s) of a word
* Work on strengthening your logos, pathos, and ethos
* Have four sources, minimum, with proper MLA citations and a Works Cited page
* Worth 100 points or 10% of your grade plus HW due.

# PURPOSE

As mentioned in the syllabus, this course focuses on the way words work in our world. One of the basic issues of the function of words is how we define them. Words are symbols only; by themselves they are devoid of meaning and are nothing more than a collection of letters and sounds. We attach meaning to words, however, and what words *mean* is the focus of this first paper. This paper also is meant to be very opinionated, so most of what you write should be based on your opinion. However, we will also be working on critical thinking, which requires that you understand the ideas of others as well, so you’ll do a bit of digging around to find out what others think as well. Your overall purpose here is to consider one specific word, what it means, why that meaning(s) is relevant and how perceptions of the word affect us. Obviously the word you choose must have significant meaning to you or you will be very unconvincing. Too, the word you choose must be a word that has some sense of controversy to it rather than one easy to define. So a word like “table” will not suffice but one like “freedom” would be fabulous. Thus in this paper you will

* Explore the various meanings and history of a word
* Understand the fluctuating, vibrant, and robust nature of language evolution
* Understand the rhetorical situation and use logos, pathos, and ethos to strengthen your writing
* Find sources to improve your critical thinking
* Practice MLA in-text citation and creating a Works Cited page

# Specifics

1. The first step to this assignment will be searching the history and etymology of your word. What this word has meant in the past and how it has changed over the years (or even centuries) is important to your understanding of what the dictionary definition is and how this word came to mean what it does.
2. You will also want to visit Wikipedia (and maybe Urban Dictionary!) and find your word and all its variations. From there, you will want to see what others have said and argued about your word. Writing about what you think without knowing what others think leads to poor critical thinking and ultimately poor writing.
3. In order to make effective rhetorical choices, you must know your audience, which will be an important part of this semester.
4. When choosing your word, try to avoid the obvious and clichéd: arguing that beauty is more than outer appearances, for example, has been (over)done. So has the idea that being rich means having friends and family who love you. And please—don’t use “love”…
5. This paper is meant to help you argue using examples from your own personal life combined with responses to what you read. Finding a balance between your own thoughts and the thoughts of others is key here. You’ll want to shoot for about an 85/15 balance: 85% of what you write should be about what YOU THINK, and the other 15% should be about what others think. This is not meant to be a research paper but an argument/opinion piece.
6. You will be expected to make a conscious and clear effort to employ all three appeals (logos, pathos, and ethos).
7. You will want a strong introduction, a thesis statement, several “mini-essay” body paragraphs that support your thesis, and a strong conclusion. These things should go without saying for pretty much everything you write: Introduce your topic; Claim, support, explain; Conclude. The key is to find fresh and new ways to do this.

# The Keys to Success

Two keys will unlock success for you with this assignment:

One, good word choice. You will be running your word choice by me, and if I am not enthused about it, move on to another word. Trust me if I tell you it will not be a good choice. There are millions of words in English; find one that you can talk about for six pages.

Two, a solid purpose. The most common weakness of this assignment tends to be a lack of a point. If you don’t know why you’re writing, your reader won’t know either. The time of writing for the teacher needs to be in your past. College writing asks you to be a grown-up and write for genuine reasons, with clear purposes. In the real world, no one writes for the teacher since there isn’t one. People write to communicate, to argue, to get their point across. If you are not writing to communicate and persuade but are writing for a grade, you will not do well on this paper. Genuinely take the time to imagine an audience, someone that really needs to understand your definition, and write for that person. It can be your mother or the President, but a clear audience and purpose will help you immensely.

# ORGANIZING BY CAUSE/EFFECT

Organizing an argument by cause/effect is one of the most common approaches to arguing any opinion: we argue that we don’t like a particular candidate—and there are several reasons why we don’t. This is a causal argument: the candidate says this and does this and represents this, and all these things cause me to not like this candidate. You decide to major in engineering, and that decision is the effect of several causes: love for math and physics, family history, promise of good pay, likelihood of employment, etc.

When considering how words work in society, how they have changed, and how the definition of words actually impacts us, what we are considering is cause and effect: the many factors that cause words to have specific meanings and connotations, and, in turn, how those meanings and connotations affect us. Thus you will organize your paper and craft a thesis that clearly demonstrates some kind of cause and effect relationship. More in separate handouts and in class.

# Requirements

* Your paper should be 6-8 pages long, typed and double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font or equivalent.
* Your name, the course, the assignment number, and date go in the upper left hand corner.
* You must have at least 4 sources but I recommend more. 6-8 would be ideal.
* You must include proper in-text citations (author and page number) of all information from your sources, whether paraphrased or quoted directly. Not to properly attribute your sources is plagiarism.
* You must include a Works Cited page of all sources according to MLA formatting. I have not required a handbook for this course, but if you have one from 101, please use it. If you do not have a handbook, you may want to purchase one. You can also find citation information online at Purdue OWL. Using online citation tools will result in incorrect citations. They simply don’t work properly. Trust me.
* You will be graded according to the five criteria: content, purpose, organization, support, and presentation. We will discuss your 201 rubrics in class.